

I call on you to hold an official public hearing in my state.

Before the disastrous 2003 decision to weaken media ownership rules (which a federal court has now overturned), you held only one official public hearing. Further, FCC officials met behind closed doors 71 times with major broadcasters – but only five times with public interest groups. And to justify your actions, you used deceptive, industry-sponsored research data.

The will of Big Media had been heeded at the expense of American citizens and democracy itself. This has to end. Before you rewrite the ownership rules, I demand an official public FCC hearing in my state, impartial and verifiable research, and transparent debates.

It is time to put the needs of democracy – a diverse, skeptical, independent and competitive media system – ahead of profit-hungry media giants.

I have found it very disturbing that you have seen fit to give away so much power to a few concentrated media outlets without letting the public weight in with their concerns. There is great danger in having most, if not all, of the information most people receive about our government, economy and entertainment from one or two sources.

Alternative sources of information are part of what make our country strong and resilient. The polarization of the country in the face of the upcoming election is partly a result of this one or two source of information system we now have in place. It is tearing the country apart rather than making us stronger.

There is a great need for diversity in our media availability and not simply given to those who pay the most for this national resource.

Please look to see how you can insure a more balanced information stream and I demand that you hold sufficient public hearings such that you get a real and authentic sense of the needs of the people you are pledged to serve.

Thanks,

Tamberlaine Harris